

learn \lɔrn\ *vb* **learned** \lɔrnd, lɔrnt\; **learn-ing** [ME *lernen*, fr. OE *lærnan*; akin to OHG *lærnen* to learn, OE *last* footprint, L *lira* furrow, track] *vi* (bef. 12c) 1 **a** (1): to gain knowledge or understanding of or skill in by study, instruction, or experience (<~ a trade) (2): MEMORIZE (<~ the lines of a play) **b**: to come to be able (<~ to dance) **c**: to come to realize (<~ed that honesty paid) 2 **a** *nonstand*: TEACH **b** *obs*: to inform of something 3: to come to know: HEAR (<we just ~ed that he was ill) ~ *vi*: to acquire knowledge or skill or a behavioral tendency *syn* see DISCOVER — **learn-able** \lɔr-nə-bəl\ *adj* — **learn-er** *n*

usage *Learn* in the sense of "teach" dates from the 13th century and was standard until at least the early 19th (made them drunk with true Hollands—and then *learned* them the art of making bargains—Washington Irving). But by Mark Twain's time it was receding to a speech form associated chiefly with the less educated (never done nothing for three months but set in his back yard and *learn* that frog to jump—Mark Twain). The present-day status of *learn* has not risen. This use persists in speech, but in writing it appears mainly in the representation of such speech or its deliberate imitation for effect.

learned *adj* (14c) 1 \lɔr-nəd\; characterized by or associated with learning: ERUDITE 2 \lɔrnt, lɔrnt\; acquired by learning (<~ behavior) — **learn-ed-ly** \lɔr-nəd-lē\ *adv* — **learn-ed-ness** \-nəd-nəs\ *n* **learn-ing** *n* (bef. 12c) 1: the act or experience of one that learns 2: knowledge or skill acquired by instruction or study 3: modification of a behavioral tendency by experience (as exposure to conditioning) *syn* see KNOWLEDGE

learning curve *n* (1922) 1: a curve plotting performance against practice; *esp*: one graphing decline in unit costs with cumulative output 2: the course of progress while learning something

learning disabled *adj* (1973): having difficulty in learning a basic scholastic skill because of a disorder (as dyslexia) that interferes with the learning process — **learning disability** *n*

learnt \lɔrnt\ *chiefly Brit past and past part of LEARN*

lease \li:s\ *n* [ME *les*, fr. AF, fr. *lessor*] (14c) 1: a contract by which one conveys real estate, equipment, or facilities for a specified term and for a specified rent; *also*: the act of such conveyance or the term for which it is made 2: a piece of land or property that is leased 3: a continuance or opportunity for continuance (a new ~ on life) **lease** *v* **leased**; **leasing** [AF *lessor*, fr. OF *laisier* to let go, fr. L *laxare* to loosen, fr. *laxus* slack — more at SLACK] (ca. 1570) 1: to grant by lease 2: to hold under a lease *syn* see HIRE — **lease-able** \li-sə-bəl\ *adj*

lease-back \li:s-bak\ *n* (1947): the sale of property with the understanding that the seller can lease it from the new owner

leasehold \li:s-höld\ *n* (1720) 1: a tenure by lease 2: property held by lease — **leasehold-er** *n*

leash \li:ʃ\ *n* [ME *lees*, *leshe*, fr. MF *laisse*, fr. OF *laisier*] (14c) 1 **a**: a line for leading or restraining an animal **b**: something that restrains 2 **a**: a set of three animals (as greyhounds, foxes, bucks, or hares) **b**: a set of three — **leash** *v*

leash law *n* (1966): an ordinance requiring dogs to be restrained when not confined to their owner's property

leash-ing \li:s-ɪŋ, -zɪŋ\ *n* [ME *lesing*, fr. OE *lēasung*, fr. *lēasian* to lie, fr. *lēas* false] (bef. 12c) *archaic*: the act of lying; *also*: LIE, FALSEHOOD

least \li:s\ *adj*, *superlative of LITTLE [ME *leest*, fr. OE *lēast*, *superl.* of *lēassa* less] (bef. 12c) 1: lowest in importance or position 2 **a**: smallest in size or degree **b**: being a member of a kind distinguished by diminutive size (<~ bittern) **c**: smallest possible: SLIGHTEST*

least *n* (12c): one that is least — at least 1: at the minimum 2: in any case

least adv, *superlative of LITTLE* (13c): in the smallest or lowest degree — **least of all**: especially not (no one, *least of all* the children, paid attention)

least common denominator *n* (1875): the least common multiple of two or more denominators

least common multiple *n* (1823) 1: the smallest common multiple of two or more numbers 2: the common multiple of lowest degree of two or more polynomials

least squares *n pl* (1825): a method of fitting a curve to a set of points representing statistical data in such a way that the sum of the squares of the distances of the points from the curve is a minimum

least-ways \li:s-wəz\ *adv* (14c) *dial*: at least

least-wise \li:s-wīz\ *adv* (15c): at least

leather \le:θər\ *n* [ME *lether*, fr. OE *lether*; akin to OHG *leder* leather, OIr *lethar*] (13c) 1: animal skin dressed for use 2: the flap of the ear of a dog — see DOG illustration 3: something wholly or partly made of leather — **leather** *adj* — **leather-like** \-līk\ *adj*

leather v **leathered**; **leather-ing** \le:θər-ɪŋ, le:θ-ɪŋ\ (13c) 1: to cover with leather 2: to beat with a strap: THRASH

leather-back \le:θər-bak\ *n* (ca. 1855): the largest existing sea turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*) distinguished by its flexible carapace composed of a mosaic of small bones embedded in a thick leathery skin

leather-ette \le:θər-ɪt\ *n*, *often attrib* [fr. *Leatherette*, a trademark] (ca. 1879): simulated leather

leather-leaf \le:θər-lēf\ *n* (ca. 1818): a north temperate ericaceous bog shrub (*Chamaedaphne calyculata*) with evergreen coriaceous leaves and small white cylindrical flowers

leathern \le:θər-n\ *adj* (bef. 12c): made of, consisting of, or resembling leather

leather-neck \le:θər-nek\ *n* [fr. the leather collar formerly part of the uniform] (ca. 1914): a member of the U.S. Marine Corps

leather-wood \le:θər-wud\ *n* (1743) 1: a small tree (*Dirca palustris*) of the mezereum family with pliant stems and yellow flowers 2: a small tree (*Cyrilla racemiflora*) of the southeastern U.S. related to the titi

leathery \le:θər-ē, le:θ-rē\ *adj* (ca. 1552): resembling leather in appearance or consistency



leatherback

leave \li:v\ *vb* **left** \left\; **leav-ing** [ME *leven*, fr. OE *lēfan*; akin to OHG *verleiben* to leave, OE *belifan* to be left over, and *perh.* to Lith *lipti* to adhere, Gk *lipos* grease, fat] *vi* (bef. 12c) 1 **a** (1): BEQUEATH, DEVISE (<left a fortune to his son) (2): to have remaining after one's death (<~s a widow and two children) **b**: to cause to remain as a trace or aftereffect (<oil ~s a stain) (<the wound left an ugly scar) 2 **a**: to cause or allow to be or remain in a specified condition (<~ the door open) (<his manner left me cold) **b**: to fail to include or take along (<left the notes at home) (<the movie ~s a lot out) **c**: to have as a remainder (4 from 7 ~s 3) **d**: to permit to be or remain subject to another's action or control (<just ~ everything to me) **e**: LET **f**: to cause or allow to be or remain available (<~ room for expansion) (<wanted to ~ himself an out) 3 **a**: to go away from: DEPART (<~ the room) **b**: DESERT, ABANDON (<left his wife) **c**: to terminate association with: withdraw from (<left school before graduation) 4: to put, deposit, or deliver before or in the process of departing (<someone left a package for you) ~ *vi*: SET OUT, DEPART — **leav-er** *n* — **leave alone**: to refrain from bothering or using

usage *Leave* (sense 2c) with the infinitive but without *to* (<leave it be) is a mostly spoken idiom used in writing *esp.* for humorous effect. It is not often criticized in British English, but American commentators, adhering to an opinion first expressed in 1881, still dislike it.

leave *n* [ME *leve*, fr. OE *lēaf*; akin to MHG *loube* permission, OE *lēafan* to allow — more at BELIEVE] (bef. 12c) 1 **a**: permission to do something **b**: authorized *esp.* extended absence from duty or employment 2: an act of leaving: DEPARTURE

leave *v* **leaved**; **leav-ing** [ME *leven*, fr. *leef* leaf] (14c): LEAF **leaved** *adj* (13c): having leaves — *usu.* used in combination (palmetto-leaved) (<four-leaved clover)

leaven \le:vən\ *n* [ME *lewin*, fr. MF, fr. (assumed) VL *levamen*, fr. L *levare* to raise — more at LEVER] (14c) 1 **a**: a substance (as yeast) used to produce fermentation in dough or a liquid; *esp*: SOURDOUGH **b**: a material (as baking powder) used to produce a gas that lightens dough or batter 2: something that modifies or lightens

leaven *v* **leavened**; **leav-en-ing** \le:v-nɪŋ, le:v-ə\ (15c) 1: to raise (as bread) with a leaven 2: to mingle or permeate with some modifying, alleviating, or vivifying element *syn* see INFUSE

leavening *n* (ca. 1626): a leavening agent: LEAVEN **leave of absence** (1771) 1: permission to be absent from duty or employment 2: LEAVE 1b

leave off *vb* (14c): STOP, CEASE **leaves** *pl* of LEAF **leave-taking** \le:v-tā-kiŋ\ *n* (14c): DEPARTURE, FAREWELL

leavings \le:v-ɪŋz\ *n pl* (14c): REMNANTS, RESIDUE **lebensraum** \le:bənz-ˈraʊm, -bən(t)s-\ *n*, *often cap* [G, fr. *Leben* living, life + *Raum* space] (1905) 1: territory believed *esp.* by Nazis to be necessary for national existence or economic self-sufficiency 2: space required for life, growth, or activity

lech \le:ʃ\ *n* (ca. 1830) 1: LETCH, LUST 2: LECHER **lech** *vi* (1911): LUST

lech-er \le:ʃər\ *n* [ME *lechor*, fr. OF *lecheor*, fr. *lechief* to lick, live in debauchery, of Gmc origin; akin to OHG *leckōn* to lick — more at LICK] (13c): a man who engages in lechery

lech-er-ous \le:ʃə-rəs, le:ʃ-rəs\ *adj* (14c): given to or suggestive of lechery — **lech-er-ous-ly** *adv* — **lech-er-ous-ness** *n*

lech-er-y \le:ʃ-ri\ *n* (13c): inordinate indulgence in sexual activity: LASCIVIOUSNESS

lech-we \le:ʃ-wē\ *n pl* **lechwe** or **lechwes** [prob. fr. Sesotho *lets'a*] (1857): an antelope (*Kobus leche*) that inhabits wetlands of southern Africa; *also*: a related antelope (*K. megaceros*) of the Nile Valley in Sudan and Ethiopia

lec-thin \le:s-θən\ *n* [ISV, fr. Gk *lekithas* yolk of an egg] (1861): any of several waxy hygroscopic phospholipids that are widely distributed in animals and plants, form colloidal solutions in water, and have emulsifying, wetting, and antioxidant properties; *also*: a mixture of or substance rich in lecithins

lec-thin-ase \le:θə-nās, -nāz\ *n* (1910): PHOSPHOLIPASE **lec-tern** \le:k-tɜrn\ *n* [ME *lecterne*, fr. MF *letrun*, fr. ML *lectorium*, fr. L *lector* reader, fr. *legere* to read — more at LEGEND] (14c): a stand used to support a book in a convenient position for a standing reader; *esp*: one from which scripture lessons are read in a church service

lec-tion \le:k-shən\ *n* [LL *lectio*, *lectio*, fr. L, act of reading — more at LESSON] (1608) 1: a liturgical lesson for a particular day 2 [NL *lection*, *lectio*, fr. L]: a variant reading of a text

lec-tion-ary \le:k-shə-ner-ē\ *n pl* **ar-ies** (1780): a book or list of lessons for the church year

lec-tor \le:k-tər, -tɔr\ *n* [ME, fr. LL, reader of the lessons in a church service, fr. L, reader, fr. *legere*] (14c): one who assists at a worship service chiefly by reading a lesson

lec-to-type \le:k-tə-tīp\ *n* [Gk *lektos* chosen (fr. *legein* to gather, choose) + E *type* — more at LEGEND] (ca. 1905): a specimen chosen as the type of a species or subspecies if the author of the name fails to designate a type

lec-ture \le:k-ʃər, -ʃər\ *n* [ME, act of reading, fr. LL *lectura*, fr. L *lectus*, pp. of *legere*] (15c) 1: a discourse given before an audience or class *esp.* for instruction 2: a formal reproof — **lec-ture-ship** \-ʃɪp\ *n*

lecture *vb* **lectured**; **lec-tur-ing** \le:k-ʃər-ɪŋ, le:k-shrɪŋ\ *vi* (ca. 1590): to deliver a lecture or a course of lectures ~ *v* 1: to deliver a lecture to 2: to reprove formally — **lec-tur-er** \-ʃər-ər, -ʃər-ər\ *n* *led past and past part of LEAD*

LED \le:l(-)-dē\ *n* [light-emitting diode] (1968): a semiconductor diode that emits light when a voltage is applied to it and that is used in an electronic display (as for a digital watch)

Le-da \le:d-ə\ *n* [L, fr. Gk *Leda*]: the mother of Clytemnestra and Castor by her husband Tyndareus and of Helen and Pollux by Zeus who comes to her in the form of a swan

\ə\ about \ə\ kitten, F table \ər\ further \ə\ ash \ə\ ace \ə\ mop, mar \ə\ out \ə\ chin \e\ bet \e\ easy \g\ go \i\ hit \i\ ice \j\ job \j\ sing \o\ go \o\ law \o\ boy \th\ thin \th\ the \ü\ loot \ü\ foot \y\ yet \z\ vision \ä, ɛ, œ, œ, u, ü, \ see Guide to Pronunciation

while moving the other unit past it to a position farther in front 2: to evade by or as if by a bypass

leap year *n* (14c) 1: a year in the Gregorian calendar containing 366 days with February 29 as the extra day 2: an intercalary year in any calendar

Lear *\li(ə)r/ n*: a legendary king of Britain and hero of Shakespeare's tragedy *King Lear*

learn *\lɜ:n/ v* **learned** *\lɜ:nd, 'lɜ:n/*; **learning** *[ME lɛrn, fr. OE leornian; akin to OHG lernēn to learn, OE last footprint, L lra furrow, track] w* (bef. 12c) 1 a (1): to gain knowledge or understanding of or skill in by study, instruction, or experience (~ a trade) (2): MEMORIZE (~ the lines of a play) b: to come to be able (~ to dance) c: to come to realize (~ed that honesty paid) 2 a **substant**: TEACH b **obj**: to inform of something 3: to come to know: HEAR (we just ~ed that he was ill) ~ *w*: to acquire knowledge or skill or a behavioral tendency *syn* see DISCOVER — **learn-able** *\lɜ:n-ə-bəl/ adj* — **learn-er** *n*

learned *adj* (14c) 1 *\lɜ:n-əd/*: characterized by or associated with learning: ERUDITE 2 *\lɜ:nd, 'lɜ:n/*: acquired by learning (~ versus innate behavior patterns) — **learn-edly** *\lɜ:n-əd-ly/ adv* — **learn-edness** *\-əd-nəs/ n*

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leash-ing *\li:-ɪŋ, -zɪŋ/ n* [ME leping, fr. OE leasung, fr. leasian to lic, fr. lic false] *archaic* (bef. 12c): the act of lying; also: LIE, FALSEHOOD

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leather *v* **leathered**; **leather-ing** *\li:ð-(ə-)rɪŋ/* (14c) 1: to cover with leather 2: to beat with a strap: THRASH

leath-er-back *\li:ð-ər-'bæk/ n* (ca. 1855): the largest existing sea turtle (*Dermochelys coriacea*) distinguished by its flexible carapace composed of a mosaic of small bones embedded in a thick leathery skin

leath-er-ette *\li:ð-ər-'et/ trademark* — used for a product colored, finished, and embossed in imitation of leather grains

leath-er-leaf *\li:ð-ər-'li:f/ n* (ca. 1818): a north temperate cactaceous bog shrub (*Chamaedaphne calyculata*) with evergreen coriaceous leaves and small white cylindrical flowers

leath-ern *\li:ð-ər-n/ adj* (bef. 12c): made of, consisting of, or resembling leather

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leath-ery *\li:ð-(ə-)rɪ/ adj* (ca. 1552): resembling leather in appearance or consistency

leave *\li:v/ v* **left** *\left/*; **leav-ing** *[ME leven, fr. OE lifian; akin to OHG verleiben to leave, OE lifian to be left over, Gk lipos fat] w* (bef. 12c) 1 a (1): BEQUEATH, DEVISE (left a fortune to his son) (2): to have remaining after one's death (~s a widow and two children) b: to cause to remain as a trace or aftereffect (oil ~s a stain) (the wound left an ugly scar) 2 a: to cause or allow to be or remain in a specified condition (~ the door open) (his manner left me cold) b: to fail to include or take along (left the notes at home) (the movie ~s a lot out) c: to have as a remainder (4 from 7 ~s 3) d: to permit to be or remain subject to another's action or control (just ~ everything to me) e **substant**: LET 1: to cause or allow to be or remain available (~ room for expansion) (left my phone number with the receptionist) (wanted to ~ himself an out) 3 a: to go away from: DEPART (~ the room) b: DESERT, ABANDON (left his wife) c: to terminate association with: withdraw from (left school before graduation) 4: to



leatherback.

put, deposit, or deliver before or in the process of departing (the postman left a package for you) ~ *w*: SET OUT, DEPART — **leav-er** *n*

leave *n* [ME leve, fr. OE leaf; akin to MHG loube permission, OE alifan to allow — more at BELIEVE] (bef. 12c) 1 a: permission to do something b: authorized esp. extended absence from duty or employment 2: an act of leaving: DEPARTURE

leave *v* **leaved**; **leav-ing** *[ME leven, fr. leaf/leaf] (13c): LEAF*

leaved *adj* (13c): having leaves — *usu.* used in combination (palmate-leaved) (a four-leaved clover)

leaved *\li:v-ən/ n* [ME levain, fr. MF, fr. (assumed) VL levamen, fr. L leuare to raise — more at LEVER] (14c) 1 a: a substance (as yeast) used to produce fermentation in dough or a liquid; esp.: SOURDOUGH b: a material (as baking powder) used to produce a gas that lightens dough or batter 2: something that modifies or lightens a mass or aggregate

leaven *v* **leavened**; **leav-en-ing** *\li:v-(ə-)nɪŋ/* (15c) 1: to raise (as bread) with a leaven 2: to mingle or permeate with something modifying, alleviating, or vivifying element *syn* see INFUSE

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leave *n* (1771) 1: permission to be absent from duty or employment 2: LEAVE *lb*

leave off *v* (14c): STOP, CEASE

leaves *pl* of LEAF

leave-taking *\li:v-'tɪk-ɪŋ/ n* (14c): DEPARTURE, FAREWELL

leav-ings *\li:-vɪŋz/ n* *pl* (14c): REMNANT, RESIDUE

le-beer-ram *\li:-bɛər-'ræm, -bɛər-'(t)s-/ n*, often *esp* [G, fr. leben living, life (akin to OHG lebēn to live) + raum space, fr. OHG rām — more at LIVE, ROOM] (1905) 1: territory believed esp. by Nazis to be necessary for national existence or economic self-sufficiency 2: space required for life, growth, or activity

lech *\le:tʃ/ n* (1830) 1: LETCH 2: LECHER

lech *v* (1911): LUST

lech-er *\le:tʃ-ər/ n* [ME lechour, fr. OF lecheor, fr. lechier to lick, live in debauchery, of Gmc origin; akin to OHG leckōn to lick — more at LICK] (12c): a man who engages in lechery

lech-er-ous *\le:tʃ-(ə-)rəs/ adj* (14c): given to or suggestive of lechery — **lech-er-ous-ly** *adv* — **lech-er-ous-ness** *n*

lech-ery *\le:tʃ-(ə-)rɪ/ n* (13c): inordinate indulgence in sexual activity: LASCIVIOUSNESS

lec-ithin *\li:-tʃɪ-'θɪn/ n* [ISV, fr. Gk lekitos yolk of an egg] (1861): any of several waxy hygroscopic phosphatides that are widely distributed in animals and plants, form colloidal solutions in water, and have emulsifying, wetting, and antioxidant properties; also: a mixture of or substance rich in lecithins

lec-ithin-ase *\li:-tʃɪ-'næs, -næz/ n* (1910): PHOSPHOLIPASE

lec-tor *\le:k-'tɔ:r/ n* [ME lectore, fr. MF letrun, fr. ML lectorium, fr. L lector reader, fr. lectus pp. of legere to read — more at LEGEND] (14c): READING DESK; esp.: one from which scripture lessons are read in a church service

lec-tion *\le:k-'tʃən/ n* [LL lectio-, lectio, fr. L, act of reading — more at LESSON] (1608) 1: a liturgical lesson for a particular day 2 [NL lectio-, lectio, fr. L]: a variant reading of a text

lec-tion-ary *\le:k-'tʃən-ər-ɪ/ n, pl -ar-ies* (1780): a book or list of lessons for the church year

lec-tor *\le:k-'tɔ:r, -tɔ:(ə)r/ n* [ME, fr. LL, reader of the lessons in a church service, fr. L, reader, fr. lectus, pp.] (14c): one who assists at a worship service chiefly by reading a lesson

lec-to-type *\le:k-'tə-(t)ɪp/ n* [Gk lektos chosen (fr. legein to gather, choose) + E type — more at LEGEND] (ca. 1905): a specimen chosen as the type of a species or subspecies if the author of the name fails to designate a type

lec-ture *\le:k-'tʃər, -ʃər/ n* [ME, act of reading, fr. LL lectura, fr. L lectus, pp.] (15c) 1: a discourse given before an audience or class esp. for instruction 2: a formal reproof — **lec-ture-ship** *\-ʃɪp/ n*

lecture *v* **lectured**; **lec-tur-ing** *\le:k-'tʃər-ɪŋ, -ʃɪŋ/* *w* (ca. 1590): to deliver a lecture or a course of lectures ~ *v* 1: to deliver a lecture to 2: to reprove formally — **lec-tur-er** *\-tʃər-ər, -ʃɪr-ər/ n*

led *past and past part of LEAD*

LED *\led/* *n* [light-emitting diode] (ca. 1970): a semiconductor diode that emits light when subjected to an applied voltage and that is used in an electronic display (as for a digital watch)

Le-da *\li:-də/ n* [L, fr. Gk Leda]: the mother of Clytemnestra and Castor by her husband Tyndareus and of Helen and Pollux by Zeus who comes to her in the form of a swan

leder-hose *\li:-dər-'həz-/ n* *pl* [G, fr. MHG lederhose, fr. leder leather + hose trousers] (1936): leather shorts often with suspenders worn esp. in Bavaria

ledge *\le:dʒ/ n* [ME legge bar of a gate] (1535) 1: a raised or projecting edge or molding intended to protect or check (a window ~) 2: an underwater ridge or reef esp. near the shore 3 a: a narrow flat surface or shelf; esp.: one that projects from a wall of rock b: rock solid or continuous enough to form ledges (the field was full of ~) 4: LODGE, VEIN — **ledgy** *\le:dʒ-ɪ/ adj*

led-ger *\le:dʒ-ər/ n* [ME legger, prob. fr. leyen, leggen to lay] (1588) 1: a book containing accounts to which debits and credits are posted from books of original entry 2: a horizontal timber secured to the uprights of scaffolding to support the putlog

ledger board *n* (ca. 1909) 1: a horizontal board forming the top rail of a simple fence or the handrail of a balustrade 2: RIBBON 2a

ledger line *n* (ca. 1700): a short line added above or below a musical staff to extend its range

\ə/ about *\ɪ/* kitten, F table *\ɜ:/* further *\ə/* ash *\ə/* acc *\ə/* out, cart
\a/ out *\tʃ/* chin *\e/* bet *\e/* easy *\g/* go *\h/* hit *\l/* loc *\j/* job
\g/ sing *\o/* go *\ɔ/* law *\ɔ/* boy *\θ/* thin *\ð/* the *\ʊ/* foot *\f/* foot
\j/ yet *\z/* vision *\k/* k. °, c. °, æ, ɛ, ɪ, ʊ see Guide to Pronunciation